Listing of the Claims

1. (currently amended)   A method for managing transactions at a network storage device, comprising:

[[a)]] receiving a transaction at said network storage device; and

[[b)]] assigning a priority to said transaction at said network storage device based at least in part on a usage policy.

2. (original) A method as in claim 1, further comprising receiving said usage policy at said network storage device, and wherein said network storage device is a NAS device.

3. (original) A method as in claim 1, further comprising:

reading meta data from said transaction; and

comparing said meta data to a number of rules defined in said usage policy, wherein assigning said priority to said transaction is based on at least part of said meta data satisfying at least one condition of said number of rules.

4. (original) A method as in claim 1, further comprising ordering said transaction among other transactions in a queue at said network storage device.

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5. (currently amended)   A method for managing transactions at a network storage device, comprising:

[[a)]] generating a usage policy for said network storage device; and

[[b)]] distributing said usage policy to said network storage device for prioritizing a plurality of transactions received at said network storage device relative to one another.

6. (original) A method as in claim 5, further comprising identifying said network storage device on a network, and wherein said network storage device is a NAS device.

7. (currently amended)   A method as in claim 5, wherein said usage policy comprises a number of rules, each [[defining]] including meta data and a corresponding priority.

8. (currently amended)   An apparatus for managing a plurality of a number of transactions received at a network storage device, comprising:

computer readable storage medium at said network storage device;

a usage policy stored on said computer readable storage medium; and

computer readable program code residing in said computer readable storage medium, comprising program code for prioritizing said number of transactions plurality of received transactions relative to one another based on said usage policy.

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9. (original) An apparatus as in claim 8, wherein said computer readable program code is a software agent, and wherein said network storage device is a NAS device.

10. (original) An apparatus as in claim 8, wherein said usage policy comprises a number of rules which define a number of priorities for a number of meta data, wherein said program code assigns one of said priorities to one of said transactions when said transaction satisfies at least one of said rules.

11. (currently amended)   An apparatus as in claim 8, wherein said number of transactions are packetized signals comprising at least one data field and at least one meta data field, wherein said program code reads said at least one meta data field and orders said number of transactions among other transactions in a queue based on said at least one meta data field satisfying a condition of a rule in said usage policy.

12. (original) An apparatus as in claim 8, wherein said usage policy comprises a number of default rules.

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13. (currently amended) An apparatus for managing ~~a number~~ a plurality of transactions received at a network storage device, comprising:

computer readable storage medium; and

computer readable program code residing in said storage medium, including program code for defining a usage policy for prioritizing said plurality of received transactions relative to one another ~~said number of transactions~~.

14. (original) An apparatus as in claim 13, wherein said computer readable program code resides at a policy management server and further comprises program code for distributing said usage policy to said network storage device.

15. (original) An apparatus as in claim 13, wherein said computer readable program code further comprises program code for identifying said network storage device, and wherein said network storage device is a NAS device.

16. (currently amended)   An apparatus as in claim 13, wherein said computer readable program code further comprises program code for prioritizing said ~~number of~~ transactions based on said usage policy.

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17. (currently amended)   An apparatus as in claim 16, wherein said computer readable program code further comprises:

[[a)]] program code for installing on a policy management server, said program code for defining a usage policy; and

[[b)]] program code for installing on said network storage device, said program code for prioritizing said ~~number of~~ transactions.

18. (currently amended)   An apparatus as in claim 13, wherein said ~~number of~~ transactions are incoming transactions to said network storage device.

19. (currently amended)   An apparatus as in claim 13, wherein said ~~number of~~ transactions are outgoing transactions from said network storage device.

20. (currently amended)   An apparatus for managing a number of transactions at a network storage device, comprising:

[[a)]] means for reading meta data from said number of transactions at said network storage device; and

[[b)]] means for prioritizing said number of transactions based at least in part on said meta data, wherein said prioritizing means resides at said network storage device.

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21. (original) An apparatus as in claim 20, further comprising means for transmitting said number of transactions based at least in part on a priority thereof.

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